

**City of Woodstock
Special City Council Budget Workshop
April 11, 2014
Council Chambers**

MINUTES

A special Budget Workshop meeting of the Woodstock City Council was called to order by Mayor Brian Sager at 1:30PM on Friday, April 11, 2014 in the Council Chambers at Woodstock City Hall. Notice of this Special Meeting was posted 48 hours in advance at Woodstock City Hall. All media was notified of this Special Meeting. All Council members were notified of this Special Meeting.

Mayor Sager stated that the purpose of this meeting is a budget workshop to discuss the FY2014/2015 Budget and to consider an ordinance abating a portion of the 2013 calendar year Property Tax Levy.

A roll call was taken.

Council members present: Julie Dillon, Maureen Larson, RB Thompson, Mark Saladin, Joseph Starzynski, and Mayor Brian Sager. Michael Turner arrived at 1:35PM.

Staff present: City Manager Roscoe Stelford, Finance Director Paul Christensen, Human Resources Director Deb Schober, Public Works Director Paul Ruscko, Opera House Director John Scharres, Library Director Nick Weber, Police Chief Robert Lowen, Recreation Director Dave Zinnen, Community Development Director Cort Carlson, Assistant Public Works Director Jeff VanLanduyt, Deputy Chief of Police John Lieb, Opera House Box Office Manager Daniel Campbell, Opera House Building Manager Mark Greenleaf, Opera House Production Assistant Scott Creighton, and Chief Deputy Clerk Cindy Smiley.

Mayor Sager noted that a quorum is present so it is appropriate to proceed.

In response to an inquiry from Mayor Sager, Chief Deputy Clerk Smiley verified that the agenda before the Council is a true and correct copy of the posted agenda.

DISCUSSION – FY2014/2015 BUDGET

Mayor Sager commended City staff for the work they have put in on the budget document and asked for comments from City Manager Roscoe Stelford. Mr. Stelford commended and thanked City Staff for their work on the budget. He noted that there were several new staff members involved in developing the budget and that this year's budget was created using the same format as used in previous years. He stated that it is his intent to make many changes to the budget process and final document next year and that he looks forward to sitting down with Council at the retreat to discuss these proposed changes, including what they look for and what they want to see included in the budget and hopes they will share the format that they would prefer to use.

Finance Director Paul Christensen also thanked staff for their work on the budget. He emphasized that the budget is balanced and that the City is strong, as the residents have come to expect.

M. Turner noted that the number one issue that is brought to him by residents is taxes. He further noted that while the economy has started to rebound, many individuals have not yet recovered and that taxes and efficiencies are the watchword. He stated that Council must analyze expenditures more closely than ever.

Mayor Sager noted that before looking forward to the coming fiscal year, it is appropriate to also identify the fact that the City Council and City Administration accomplished several goals in the current year and recognized that these “just don’t happen” but rather are the result of hard work by the employees throughout the year to accomplish these significant goals. He also noted that, while things are improving, this is not a rapid recovery which is reflected in the lives of the City’s residents and that it is going to take some time for the residents to gain an overall sense of recovery.

Mayor Sager also noted the significant goals and programs recommended for the upcoming fiscal year stating that he appreciates the visionary approach to identifying these programs. He then stated that, in the interest of time and efficiency, he wished to group certain items together for discussion and then move forward to another group.

In response to a question from J. Starzynski, Mayor Sager noted that the website redesign noted in the proposed budget would be a more branded website for the City and would be more multifaceted but that this is not part of a new proposed global marketing program for the City. In response to a question from M. Turner, R. Stelford stated that the specific program is not included in the budget as the figures were not received for inclusion but that some unallocated funds are available for inclusion in the budget for anything the Council deems worthy. Mayor Sager stated that the marketing program is a priority item which requires a more in-depth discussion than time will allow today and indicated that he wished to do this in a workshop session.

Council turned to the review of specific sections of the FY14/15 Budget document.

Introduction

There were no questions or comments concerning the Introduction items, pages i through xix.

General Fund Revenues, General Government, Finance, City Hall

R. Stelford mentioned that the IT position has been moved from the Finance Department into General Government. He also noted that it is proposed to move the Grant Writer position from part-time to full-time effective January 1, 2015, depending upon revenues. He stated that it is also proposed to add another IT position as a result of need. In response to a question from J. Dillon, R. Stelford explained the cooperative that has been formed to bring fiber to the community and the benefits that would bring to the City of Woodstock, including in the area of economic development, as well as to the other partners. He also noted that funding for this is found in the General Fund CIP.

Human Resources

In response to a question from M. Larson concerning sick leave conversion, R. Stelford explained that a budgetary change was made in this year's budget document to more accurately reflect funding this item. In response to further inquiries concerning this item, Mr. Stelford stated that it is provided for in the Union contract, with the FOP making it clear that they would not concede loss of this benefit. He noted that, while the City Administration considered taking this item to arbitration, after further review of other contracts, it was felt that the City would not prevail.

Discussion followed of the benefits and compensation of employees of public vs. private employers with Mayor Sager noting that the wish has been expressed by some Council members to move more toward the middle. He further noted that he wishes to have this be one of the major discussion items at the next City Council Workshop which will be scheduled for sometime in May or June. M. Turner stated he would like to see a consensus on this item at the next workshop, namely, is the City willing to look at this seriously or is it going to remain the same. In addition, he stated that he would not object to union employees and non-union employees being treated differently. Mayor Sager emphasized that this is a Council decision not a staff decision and that it will not turn over in a single year because of contract duration.

M. Larson noted that she would like to see a comparison of benefits and the differences between the public and private sectors. Concerning the accumulation of sick leave, D. Schober noted that most private employers have a short-term disability program, while the City does not. Allowing employees to accumulate sick time provides them with short-term disability.

D. Schober noted that the City is holding down personnel costs by maintaining 22.5 FTE positions empty and not funded. She also noted that the City Administration reworked the employees' health insurance program saving significant dollars. In response to a question from M. Turner concerning whether the City had too many employees previously, R. Stelford noted that at times it is difficult to add new programs or accomplish new things because our personnel resources are pushed to the limit. He stated that the City is able to keep up with the way things have been going but if we wish to implement new programs, we will have to look at if the City has enough resources. Mayor Sager noted that one of the reasons the City has been able to continue to successfully provide services with a reduced number of employees is because of staff's ability to retool. He also noted that the City must ask itself what are the highest priorities at this time in the economy. M. Larson commended staff for saving \$232,000 by changing the City's Third Party Administrator.

Health & Life and IMRF

In response to a question from J. Dillon, D. Schober detailed the amounts contributed by the various employee groups for their health insurance. Discussion followed of insurance deductibles with M. Turner suggesting offering a high-deductible Health Plan and letting the employees choose which plan they want or go to the exchanges. He further stated that these benefits are costing more than they should compared to the private sector. Mayor Sager again noted that this will be an item discussed in-depth at the Council Workshop. He noted that an

end-goal should be developed with a discussion of how the City is going to move from where it is now to where we want it to be, realizing that this will not happen in one year.

There was no discussion concerning IMRF.

Community and Economic Development

R. Stelford noted that staff will be conducting interviews next week for the new Economic Development Coordinator and that it is hoped to have this individual in place by the beginning of the fiscal year. Discussion followed of the funding level for this position and the level of experience desired. In response to a question from M. Saladin, R. Stelford noted that funding is included in the budget for the Economic Development Coordinator to attend conferences and that, in fact, C. Carlson is attending the retailers' conference in Las Vegas this year.

DPW Administration

Discussion followed of the use of the current facility. P. Ruscko noted that repairs and maintenance are needed at the facility due to items being deferred in anticipation of moving to a new facility.

In response to a question from Mayor Sager, P. Ruscko detailed for the Council his plans on dealing with the loss of three long-tenured supervisors.

Discussion followed of street resurfacing and how it can be funded.

Fleet Maintenance

No questions or comments.

Parks/Park Development Fund

No questions or comments

Utility Revenues

In response to a question from M. Turner, P. Ruscko stated that the Waste Water Treatment Plants are at about 65% capacity.

Discussion followed of the policy of increasing water and sewer fees in increments. R. Stelford noted that a 3% increase is being proposed for this year. Discussion then followed of water meter conversion.

Water/Sewer/W&S Maintenance

In response to a question from Mayor Sager concerning the effect this harsh winter had on these divisions, P. Ruscko stated that there was much more overtime and material needed to maintain the water mains. He noted, however, that there were other savings so the budget is still projected to come in under budget and the City will end the year in good shape.

W&S Administration & Debt

No questions or comments.

Utility CIP & Utility Capacity CIP

No questions or comments.

Recreation Department

D. Zinnen detailed for the Council the issues the Department had this year with the Illinois Department of Public Health and the grate. He stated that the new grate is being installed and the aquatic center should be able to open on Memorial Day.

In response to a question from Mayor Sager, D. Zinnen stated that at some point in the future it will be necessary to replace the Recreation Center.

Aquatic Center/Recreation Center/NISRA

Mayor Sager noted that while we are a large contributor to NISRA, we are also the highest user. M. Larson thanked D. Zinnen for his work on the NISRA Board.

Community Events

C. Smiley described for the Council the progress that has been made in the planning for Summer in the Park, noting that it is a collaborative effort between the City, Gavers Cancer Foundation, and community leaders. She also noted that the City provides the opportunity for many not-for-profits to hold community events to benefit their organizations and, therefore, the people of Woodstock and McHenry County. She stated that coordinating these events is the work of the Office of the City Manager, the Opera House, Public Works, and the Police Department.

J. Scharres stated that the 130th anniversary of the Woodstock City Band will be celebrated at the July 2nd band concert.

Library/Library Building Fund/Library Debt Service

In response to a question from RB Thompson, N. Weber stated that City representatives are appearing before the County next week concerning the roofing grant.

N. Weber invited all to visit the library next week to see the reorganization that has taken place, noting that the Library will be closed next Friday for moving. He stated that this reorganization should improve the look and the flow of the library.

Police/Police Pension Fund

Chief Lowen noted that crime is down 23%. He further stated that the new schedule has resulted in a boost in morale in the department and that the officers in the department participated in many special community projects last year.

Concerning staffing, Chief Lowen noted that there have been several retirements in the department and that a new CSO position has been added and part-time dispatchers have been hired.

M. Turner congratulated the Chief on reducing crime.

Discussion followed of the motorcycle unit, the bicycle unit, and the canine unit, noting the benefits of each.

MFT

No questions or comments.

Wireless Alarm Systems

No questions or comments.

Liability Insurance

No questions or comments.

Paratransit

No questions or comments.

Debt Service

No questions or comments.

TIF

RB Thompson stated that he would like to see the alleyway, the area behind the theatre and Chop Suey Hut, and the stone wall around the Park in the Square projects resolved. Mayor Sager stated that he agrees but that it is important to prioritize projects and mentioned including the Old Courthouse and finishing the streetscape. He noted that the alleyway is private.

RB Thompson stated he liked the new cigarette receptacles.

General Fund CIP

In response to a comment from RB Thompson that he supports filling in sidewalks to discourage people walking in the streets, Mayor Sager stated that this is an infrastructure program that is on temporary suspension and must be talked about seriously. M. Larson suggested looking at grant opportunities for sidewalks.

Revolving Loan Fund

No questions or comments.

Environmental Management Fund

No questions or comments.

Hotel/Motel Tax

No questions or comments.

Supplemental Information

No questions or comments.

After a brief discussion concerning possible items to be discussed at a future workshop session, it was the consensus of Council that the budget as discussed today will be presented for approval at the April 15, 2014 City Council meeting.

PROPERTY TAX ABATEMENT

After a brief discussion of the options available, motion by M. Turner, second by J. Dillon to approve Ordinance 14-O-23, An Ordinance Abating a Portion of the 2013 Tax Levy of the City of Woodstock, McHenry County, Illinois.

A roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Dillon, Larson, Saladin, Starzynski, Thompson, Turner, and Mayor Sager. Nays: none. Abstentions: none. Absentees: none. Motion carried.

ADJOURN

Motion by M. Larson, second by M. Saladin, to adjourn to the next regular meeting of the Woodstock City Council at 7:00PM on April 15, 2014 in the Council Chambers of Woodstock City Hall. Aye: Dillon, Larson, Saladin, Starzynski, Thompson, Turner, and Mayor Sager. Nays: none. Abstentions: none. Absentees: none. Meeting adjourned at 4:32PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Cindy Smiley
Chief Deputy Clerk